

White House wades into Spotify controversy as India.Arie, David Crosby, Stephen Stills and more artists pull music

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The White House is joining the [debate](#) about coronavirus misinformation on streaming platform Spotify, insisting that more needs to be done to ensure Americans get accurate information about the pandemic.

Press secretary Jen Psaki called it a “positive step” that Spotify had [decided](#) to add disclaimers about covid misinformation in response to criticism from medical professionals and musicians that some content, in particular from provocative podcaster Joe Rogan, spreads false information about the coronavirus and vaccines.

“Our hope is that all major tech platforms and all major news sources, for that matter, be responsible and be vigilant to ensure the American people have access to accurate information on something as significant as covid-19,” Psaki [said](#) Tuesday. “That certainly includes Spotify.”

“So this disclaimer, it’s a positive step, but we want every platform to continue doing more to call out misinformation and disinformation while also uplifting accurate information,” she added.

Hundreds of medical professionals have [criticized](#) Spotify over the past few weeks for allowing Rogan to spread “false and societally harmful assertions.” After artists including Neil Young and Joni Mitchell said they would protest the service and Britain’s Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, who have a deal to host and produce Spotify podcasts, also [expressed](#) “concerns,” Rogan [said](#) he would do better research on covid-19 and start including mainstream experts alongside guests who espouse more fringe opinions.

Spotify announced Sunday that it would make slight changes to its policies on content concerning covid-19. They include publicly publishing the company's internal rules for what is allowed on the platform, "testing ways to highlight" those rules to its creators and "working to add a content advisory to any podcast episode that includes a discussion about COVID-19," Spotify CEO Daniel Ek wrote in a news release.

But that hasn't quelled the backlash. Singer India.Arie was among the latest musicians to say she wants her catalogue of work removed from the platform.

"I have decided to pull my music and podcast from Spotify," she wrote Tuesday on Instagram. "Neil Young opened a door that I MUST walk through. I believe in freedom of speech. However, I find Joe Rogan problematic for reasons OTHER than his Covid interviews," she added. "For me its also his language around race." Arie didn't add details but said it was about "RESPECT — who gets it and who doesn't."

Former president Donald Trump's niece Mary L. Trump, who wrote a best-selling book highly critical of her uncle, also announced that she would be removing her podcast from Spotify.

"I know it's not a big deal but hope it will be part of a growing avalanche," she tweeted while thanking Young and singer Joni Mitchell for their "courage in leading the way." Mary Trump got a shout-out from musician Nils Lofgren, who wrote on Twitter, "Thank you so much @MaryLTrump It means so much. It's a huge deal. You walk the walk."

Writer and social commentator Roxane Gay also tweeted Tuesday that she had removed her podcast from the platform.

It won't move any sort of needle but I removed my podcast from Spotify. That's all there really is to say about that. Onward.

— roxane gay (@rgay) February 1, 2022

Singer-songwriter Graham Nash said he stood in solidarity with Young, his former bandmate. "Having heard the Covid disinformation spread by Joe Rogan on Spotify, I completely agree with and support my friend, Neil Young and I am requesting that my solo recordings be removed from the service," he said in a statement, according to Rolling Stone.

David Crosby, Stephen Stills and Nash joined Young on Wednesday in calling for their music to be removed from Spotify, writing, "While we always value alternate points of view, knowingly spreading disinformation during this global pandemic had deadly consequences. Until real action is taken to show that a concern for humanity must be balanced with commerce, we don't want our music — or the music that we made together — to be on the same platform."

All this comes in the wake of a letter from Young demanding that his music be removed from Spotify in response to "fake information about vaccines" on the platform. He singled out Rogan, who hosts "The Joe Rogan Experience" podcast, writing: "They can have Rogan or Young. Not both."

Rogan, for his part, posted a nearly 10-minute Instagram video Sunday saying that he will make changes to his show to decrease the spread of misinformation. He also said he would “do his best” to better research the subjects he and his guests discuss, “the controversial ones in particular — and have all the pertinent facts at hand before I discuss them,” he added. “I don’t always get it right.”